

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /071 W

-----069279 120612Z /65

R 101210Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0781

INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 0220

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SE

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT MOVES AGAINST OPPONENTS AND STEPS UP  
SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

REF: A) VICTORIA 185, B) VICTORIA 194

1. SEYCHELLES POLICE ON MARCH 4-5 ARRESTED DISPARATE GROUP  
OF BETWEEN 12-20 SUPPORTERS OF DEPOSED PRESIDENT MANCHAM,  
INCLUDING SEVERAL LEADING PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN INCIPIENT  
MOVEMENT TO REVITALIZE MANCHAM'S POLITICAL PARTY (SDP). ALL  
WERE CHARGED WITH MINOR OFFENCES RELATING TO ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY  
STEMMING FROM FEB. 19 SDP MEETING ON ISLAND OF PRASLIN (REFTEL A).  
A SEEMINGLY UNCONCERNED PRESIDENT RENE HAD TOLD BRITISH HIGH COM-  
MISSIONER PUGH THAT GOVERNMENT ALLOWED MEETING TO TAKE PLACE DESPITE  
IRREGULARITIES AND GAVE NO INDICATION HE WOULD MOVE AGAINST SDP  
LEADERS. AMONG THOSE ARRESTED WERE FORMER MP DAN PAYET  
(ALSO CHARGED WITH ASSAULT), OWEN HOAREAU, WHO WAS PRINCIPAL  
SPEAKER AT PRASLIN MEETING AND SEVERAL NEWLY-ELECTED SDP  
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OFFICE HOLDERS. SOME KNOWN ANTI-GOVERNMENT RESIDENTS OF  
PRINCIPAL ISLAND OF MAHE WHO ATTENDED PRASLIN MEETING WERE ALSO  
ARRESTED. ACCORDING GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER, ALL WERE RELEASED  
ON BAIL SHORTLY AFTER THEIR ARREST PENDING COURT APPEARANCE  
SCHEDULED "IN NEAR FUTURE." PRESIDENT RENE TOLD INDEPENDENT  
"WEEKEND LIFE" PUBLISHER VERLAQUE MARCH 8 THAT HE HAD APPARENTLY  
NOT SUCCEEDED IN ACHIEVING UNITY THROUGH CONCILIATORY APPROACH

TOWARD MANCHAM SUPPORTERS AND WOULD "NOW HAVE TO SHOW THEM THE BOOT."

2. IN THREE WEEKS SINCE PRASLIN MEETING, GOS SECURITY FORCES HAVE STEPPED UP SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES AND INCREASED FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF STOP AND SEARCH OPERATIONS BY MOTORIZED ARMY PATROLS. AS INDICATION OF INCREASED GOS CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY, EVEN SOME TOURIST BUSES PRESENTLY BEING STOPPED AND ALL ABOARD THOROUGHLY SEARCHED. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE UNSETTLED PERIOD FOLLOWING JUNE 5 COUP D'ETAT, LIBERATION ARMY HAS RETURNED TO FOREGROUND WITH RESPECT TO LAW AND ORDER FUNCTION.

3. COMMENT: ARRESTS AND INCREASED SECURITY ACTIVITY HAVE HAD UNSETTLING EFFECT ON POPULACE AND MOOD OF COUNTRY DURING PAST FEW DAYS HAS TURNED SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE. RUMOR MILL IS UNUSUALLY ACTIVE AND EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NUMBER OF UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS THAT GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY SITUATION THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF COUP. SOME INDICATION OF REASONS BEHIND GOS ACTION AGAINST MANCHAM SUPPORTERS MAY SURFACE MARCH 13 WHEN PRESIDENT RENE WILL HOLD FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE IN EIGHT MONTHS.  
MATTSON

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## Message Attributes

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